

VZCZCXRO0958  
RR RUEHMA RUEHPA  
DE RUEHOS #0398/01 2820716  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 080716Z OCT 08  
FM AMCONSUL LAGOS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0216  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 9866

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000398

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - HANDLE ACCORDINGLY  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/WA  
STATE FOR INR/AA  
DOC FOR 3317/ITA/OA/KBURRESS  
DOC FOR 3130/USFC/OIO/ANESA/DHARRIS  
STATE PASS NSC FOR BOBBY PITTMAN  
STATE PASS USTR FOR USTR AGAMA  
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ  
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART  
STATE PASS TDA FOR LFITT, PMARIN  
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER  
STATE PASS OES FOR HOGAN  
STATE PASS NOAA FOR DKLEMM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [NOAA](#) [EFIS](#) [SENV](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA SURPRISES WITH MODEL PROGRAM FOR SEA  
TURTLE CONSERVATION

1.(U) Summary: On September 25 and 26 inspectors from the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service, an arm of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science (OES) visited the Nigerian Department of Fisheries and the Nigerian shrimp fleet to evaluate compliance with U.S. regulations for Turtle Exclusion Devices (TEDs) on shrimp trawlers. The U.S. team was impressed by the Nigerian regulations, inspectors and by compliance among commercial shrimpers. The program was praised as one of the best the U.S. inspectors had seen worldwide and the Nigerians were encouraged to take a leadership role in assisting other West African countries to adopt TED programs. The Nigerian TED program is an example of what Nigerian technocrats and industry are capable of doing, despite adverse conditions, if they are given clear incentives and effective encouragement. Nigerian interlocutors noted, however, that piracy is increasing in territorial waters and hampering industry operations. End Summary.

U.S. Inspectors Rate Nigerian TED Program Highly  
-----

12. (U) On September 25 and 26 U.S. inspectors from OES and NOAA spent two days observing Nigerian inspectors at work on vessels from eight different shrimp trawling companies. They were accompanied by the Director of the Nigerian Federal Department of Fisheries, Sola Amire, the Assistant Director Evaristus Edet, the Chief Fisheries Officer, Bola Kupolati, and Poloff. The U.S. team was impressed by the Nigerian regulations, which enabled the Department of Fisheries to fine vessels for infractions of TED regulations without the violator having recourse to court action. In the Nigerian context, this allows rapid and effective enforcement of sanctions against violators and reduces the opportunities for corruption. Equally positive was the competence and confidence of the Nigerian inspectors, who performed more tests than mandated by the United States and clearly commanded the respect of the Nigerian shrimp fishers. The U.S. team praised the cooperative attitude of the industry which was receptive to suggestions. To ensure that the U.S. team could observe inspections on working vessels just back from trawling and verify that the TEDs were actually in use, fleet operators recalled vessels to port, interrupting their fishing operations.

¶3. (U) At the end of the inspections, the U.S. team concluded that the Nigerian program was one of the best they had seen any where in the world. The inspection check list used, they said, could serve as a model for other nations. The U.S. team urged the Nigerians to take a leadership role in helping other West African nations to adopt a TED program. It was evident to the U.S. inspectors and Poloff that all Nigerian participants welcomed the United States interest in their work, and were gratified to receive recognition for their achievements. The U.S. team commented to Poloff that this contrasted with other countries, where the U.S. inspections are sometimes perceived as interference or a burden.

Industry Hampered by Piracy, Poor Infrastructure  
-----

¶4. (U) The U.S. team noted that the facilities housing the Department of Fisheries in Lagos were the most run-down of any they had ever seen, comparing unfavorably with much poorer countries. The lack of electric power during the entire visit at the facilities underlined the infrastructure deficiencies which all industries in Nigeria face. Trawler operators and Nigerian Department of Fisheries officials stressed that piracy is increasing in Nigerian waters. More than 49 incidents of piracy against the shrimp fleet including the hijacking of vessels, the shooting of captains and crewmen and the pillaging of boats have occurred in the first nine months of this year alone. Because of the piracy off the Nigerian coast, Nigerian trawler owners are encountering increasing difficulty in recruiting and retaining crewmen, and cannot risk outfitting their vessels

LAGOS 00000398 002 OF 002

with expensive electronic equipment.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Despite adverse conditions, the Nigerians have created a model TED program. The low-profile shrimp industry, lacking the glamour and profits of industrial sectors such as oil and natural gas or the prestige of major infrastructure projects appears to have avoided unwanted attention from the entrenched kleptocracy. In this context, U.S. requirements and inspections provided the incentives and encouragement for Nigerian technocrats and industry to demonstrate their capabilities. End Comment.

¶6. This cable was cleared by Abuja.  
BLAIR